



# UniWaka project -the carpooling app-

2021 organisation-wide trial

# Problem



**74% staff and 44% students drive to Unitec, alone in the car.**

The main mode of transport has not changed since 2016 but there has been a 7% decrease in staff that only travel this way and, at Mt Albert campus, a 7% increase in willingness to use either public transport or e-bikes in the future.

Key barriers have remained the same:

- living a long way from campus make driving the only practical option
- the increase in commute time is a turn-off for using the alternatives

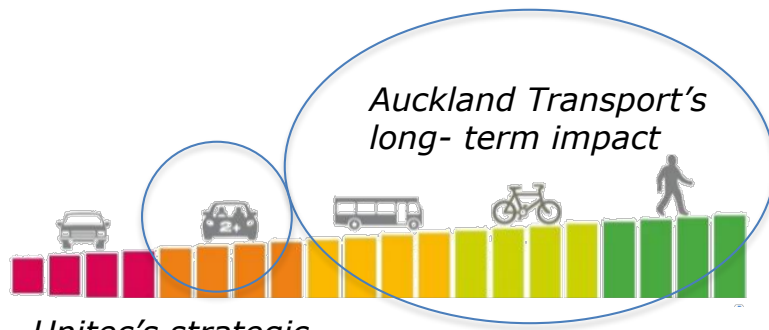
Unitec data is representative of the wider issue – **in a city built for cars, Aucklanders typically spend 20 working days a year stuck in traffic.**

Auckland Transport will continue to make improvements focused on the long-term impact and the three most sustainable travel modes: walking, cycling and public transport.

This will take time. In meanwhile:

- Some benefits of working and studying remotely will carry over into this year, but as with the active commute (i.e. cycling & walking) - these are the options taken up by a minority.
- The rest of us, especially those living a long way from campus, face Auckland traffic or time-consuming alternatives.
- As construction of Wairaka precinct commences at the Mt Albert campus, we will see parking adding to the time and cost of our car commute.
- Some of us will use this as an opportunity to try other transport modes, but others will end up even more frustrated by the lack of practical choices.

# Solution



*Unitec's strategic contribution*

Unitec, as part of its Property Strategy and Sustainability Strategy has a Travel Plan – committed to *"supporting those that are willing and able to leave their car at home and give more sustainable travel a go"*.

However, in the short to medium term, the car will remain the preferred option for many, so the most strategic response is to encourage people to drive less and share their cars more.

Auckland Transport (AT) has a Smart Travel platform to encourage carpooling but matches rarely happen.

We took on the challenge to find out why.

**In theory, carpooling is the most convenient, and time efficient alternative to driving alone.**

Added benefits include reduced road congestion, air pollution and demands on road and parking infrastructure.

**In practice, carpooling is like dating.**

Finding your true match is both exciting and a lot of work. It is about trial and error.

Carpooling is not just about coordinating work schedules and travel routes, it's also about finding someone you can travel with without awkwardness.

Carpooling's biggest issue is finding a match.

The UniWaka Project started as a student design challenge of addressing this key issue.

The first design draft caught Auckland Transport's attention, picking up a 'Matchmaker award 2018'.

The app has since been coded by our students, and with AT's support, two and a half years later, we are getting ready for the organisation wide trial.

We need your support.

# UniWaka project – a different approach to carpooling

## **Simple - the sole purpose of the app is to help you find a carpooling match**

Alternative apps, such as Auckland Transport's Smart Travel encourages carpooling, but as a mixed-mode commute platform, it also presents you with public transport, walking and cycling options.

To maximise your chances of finding a match, UniWaka has a:

- Clear focus – a single to and from location, and driver-centric design for pick-up arrangements that work for both rider and driver
- Universal design – easy to use with generic features
- Adaptable approach – designed with an understanding that we all live busy lives and can't plan too far in advance. The app facilitates one-off matches and one-way (single trip) commitments, and only allows week-by-week schedules and planning.

## **Safe – trust is more important than a large data-base**

This app has been designed for organisational/community scale. Operating within an already established organisation, and having direct relationship with everyone using the app fosters greater sense of accountability and trust. The organisation's existing code of conduct and processes for addressing unacceptable behaviour make it easier to effectively deal with any potential safety concerns. At Unitec, this means daily living the values of Rangatiranga (responsibility) and Kaitiakitanga (guardianship)

## **Social - this app has been designed to turn commuting into a community building practice**

Unitec is full of friends and colleagues you are yet to meet. This app is a social tool, useful for establishing beneficial connections for our time at Unitec and ongoing professional life. As a trust-based app it is built to foster positive social interactions based on Ngakau Mahaki (respect) and Mahi Kotahitanga (generosity of spirit), rather than facilitate payments per ride.



# The UniWaka project



## Progress to date

### 2018

Three groups of design students commence the research project, adding to each others work, holding focus groups and mapping out the user journey. The design draft wins Auckland Transport's ['Matchmaker award 2018'](#).



### 2019

Two more schools join the project: *Community Studies* and *Computing and Information Technology*. Research into user needs and behaviors continues and in parallel, the back- and front-end development of the app starts.



### 2020

Computing students, as part of their final year Capstone project, start to code the app. Due to COVID interruptions, only outbound journey gets done. The graduates are employed to finish the great job they started.

# 2021 is the year we invite everyone to join

## Next steps

Proof of Concept testing of the app is planned for August 2021. In the lead up to this, we need a communication and marketing campaign to generate buzz, sign up users and ultimately build a supportive community to ensure this trial is a success. This is how we will do it.

